

# **God, Gays, and the GOP: Understanding Issue 1 and the 2004 Presidential Election in Ohio**

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## **A Senior Thesis**

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## ***Introduction***

The 2004 Presidential Election was a record breaking and controversial affair for the State of Ohio. Ohio's 20 Electoral College votes made the State a battleground. The campaigns of both incumbent President George W. Bush and Democrat Presidential candidate Senator John Kerry spent a lot of time and resources in their efforts to win in Ohio. There was also an important citizen's initiative on the ballot. Issue 1 would define marriage as between a man and a woman. It was placed on the ballot by the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage, an organization funded mainly by the Ohio affiliate of Focus on the Family, a leading nationwide conservative organization. Ohio was not the only state to have such an initiative on their ballot in November 2004. The states of Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon and Utah all had anti-same-sex marriage amendments on their ballot and these amendments passed in all 11 states.

The combination of factors leading up to the 2004 Presidential Election causes us to ask, did Issue 1 have any impact on the results of the 2004 Presidential Election in Ohio? This paper hypothesizes that Issue I had an effect on the results of the 2004 Presidential election in Ohio. We must look at several important areas in order to fully understand this issue. First we must understand the Democratic Party's relationship to the issue of same-sex marriage. We will then examine President Bush's relationship with the Evangelical community. Next we will explore the issue of same-sex marriage itself, and then delve into why the issue was especially pertinent in Ohio in 2004. Ohio, as a battleground, was especially vulnerable to issues like same-sex marriage. It is important for us to understand how the Issue 1 campaign was able to exploit these vulnerabilities. Finally, we will directly address the results of the presidential election in Ohio

and the impact of election irregularities. Exploring these crucial areas will allow us to see that Issue 1 did have an impact on the results of the 2004 Presidential election.

### ***Methods***

It is important to examine several different sources of information in order to get the most complete, accurate picture of the 2004 Presidential election in Ohio. Specifically, this paper critically analyzes newspaper articles from before and directly after the 2004 Presidential Election, Gallup Polls, National Election Pool exit poll results from the nation and Ohio, and raw election return data from the Ohio Secretary of State's Office. The paper also includes information from and analysis of scholarly articles and pertinent books.

### ***Same-Sex Marriage and the Democratic Party***

Same-sex marriage caused tension amongst two important groups within the Democratic Party; the African-American community and the lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual (LGBT) community. Examining how these two groups interact with the issue of same-sex marriage will help us to understand how a Democratic response to the Bush campaign could cause problems for the Kerry campaign.

Senator Kerry did not craft a response to President Bush's February 24, 2004 statement on same-sex marriage for almost two full weeks. Kerry announced his complete position on the issue while on a campaign stop in Toledo. His position had two parts: first, he believed that the issue should be decided by individual states instead of the federal government; second, he believed that same-sex marriage should not be legalized, instead advocating for the creation of

civil unions which would provide similar legal status as marriage.<sup>1</sup> Serving in the United States Senate since 1984, Kerry had quite an extensive record on the issue of LGBT rights. He voted against the Federal Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, and has advocated for the rights of the LGBT community by supporting legislation such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, hate crimes legislation, the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and the Early Treatment of HIV Act. Yet when asked about an amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution which would outlaw gay marriage he maintained that marriage should be defined as between a man and a woman.<sup>2</sup>

This position saw a mixed reaction from the LGBT community. The National Stonewall Democrats denounced the decision,<sup>3</sup> while the Human Rights Campaign acknowledged that Kerry would still be an advocate for LGBT rights regardless of the nuance of his position on gay marriage.<sup>4</sup> Kerry's difficulty defining his position illustrated an ongoing problem with his campaign; voters wanted a candidate who took a clear stance on the issues. A Pew Research Center poll found that only seven percent of voters voted for him compared to 27 percent of Bush voters because of a strong stance on the issues.<sup>5</sup>

The LGBT community has also become a cornerstone of the Democratic Party's voting bloc, especially important to recent fundraising. The Gill Foundation, a non-profit organization that funds civil rights efforts for the LGBT community, found that 92 percent of eligible, self-identified gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered voters were registered and 52 percent had voted in the 2000 Presidential Election.<sup>6</sup> The LGBT community has traditionally voted with the

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<sup>1</sup> (Healy & Phillips, 2004)

<sup>2</sup> (Graham, 2004)

<sup>3</sup> (Kuhr, 2005)

<sup>4</sup> (Farhi, 2004)

<sup>5</sup> (The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004)

<sup>6</sup> (Graham, 2004)

Democratic Party 70 to 75 percent of the time, making them an incredibly reliable voting bloc.<sup>7</sup>

Before the 2004 election, The Advocate estimated that there would be approximately 4 million LGBT voters, an impressive number especially in an election that was already seen as very close.<sup>8</sup>

In the past ten years, the LGBT community has strengthened its political voice through fundraising and campaign contributions. The contribution power of the LGBT community has been growing steadily for the past ten years. In 1996, the Human Rights Campaign donated approximately \$1.5 million to Congressional candidates, almost exclusively to Democrats. This is a significant change from twenty five years ago, when politicians would often return contributions from known members of the LGBT community.<sup>9</sup>

The African-American community has voted overwhelmingly Democratic since the 1965 passage of the Voting Rights Act under Democratic President Lyndon Johnson. Though a minority, African-Americans have voted for the Democratic Party in Presidential elections 85 to 95 percent of the time since 1992.<sup>10</sup> Integral to the politics of the African American community is the church. The “black church” has served as a central organization point for the African American community.<sup>11</sup> Research indicates that just looking at race is a poor predictor of attitudes on homosexuality. Instead, it is important to understand the extent of an individual’s religiousness to predict how they feel about homosexuality. African-Americans who identified themselves as attending church regularly were likely to have similar attitudes towards homosexuality as whites who identified themselves as attending church regularly.<sup>12</sup> In fact,

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<sup>7</sup> (Keen, 2008)

<sup>8</sup> (Graham, 2004)

<sup>9</sup> (Campbell & Davidson, 2000)

<sup>10</sup> (Bositis, 2008)

<sup>11</sup> (Schulte & Battle, 2004)

<sup>12</sup> (Schulte & Battle, 2004)

African-American evangelicals are likely to have the same views as white evangelicals towards moral and culturally issues, but disagree on the role that the government should play in their lives.<sup>13</sup>

Yet these shared cultural and moral beliefs do not frequently translate into similar political action. As a result, the African-American religious community has become a target for the Christian Right.<sup>14</sup> Issue 1 became an opportunity for the Christian Right to engage the African-American religious community in Ohio. A study of the attitudes of the Columbus area religious community towards Issue 1 found that organizations mobilized in support of Issue 1 were much more active in contacting all churches in the area, with a particular focus on African-American churches. The study found that 70 percent of predominately African-American churches sampled had been contacted by or had heard of the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage, the leading proponent of Issue 1, compared to Ohioans Protecting the Constitution, the leading opponent of Issue 1, which had only contacted 11.1 percent of those same African-American churches sampled.<sup>15</sup>

Several leaders in Cleveland's African-American religious community made clear their support for Issue 1, going so far as to hold a press conference announcing their support for the Issue.<sup>16</sup> The study of Columbus area churches also found that "Black Protestant" clergy was the second most likely to engage their congregation in conversations regarding Issue 1.<sup>17</sup> It is unclear whether this support translated into support for the Republican Party. We will discuss this further when looking at statewide vote totals.

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<sup>13</sup> (Calhoun-Brown, 1997)

<sup>14</sup> (Calhoun-Brown, 1997)

<sup>15</sup> (Djupe, Neiheisel, & Sokhey, 2007)

<sup>16</sup> (Tinsley, 2004)

<sup>17</sup> (Djupe, Neiheisel, & Sokhey, 2007)

### ***President Bush and the Evangelical Community***

The evangelical community was an important element of the Bush base in 2000. Bush's political upbringing in Texas had shown him the importance of using religion to connect with people on the campaign trail.<sup>18</sup> He had wooed the evangelical community in 2000 by being incredibly open about his faith. As a born-again Christian, Bush the candidate was able to speak directly to the faith community, something that no candidate or President had been able to do since Jimmy Carter. As a result, Bush became a de facto leader of the Christian Conservative Right.<sup>19</sup> Yet the 2000 campaign failed to turn out as many Evangelical voters as had been expected. Bush advisor Karl Rove estimates that of the approximately 19 million evangelical voters, only 15 million voted in the 2000 election.<sup>20</sup> These sidelined voters represented an opportunity for the Bush campaign to gain more votes without drastically changing their message.

The challenge for President Bush was finding a way to speak to the Christian Right without alienating less conservative Republican voters and independents. Using biblical language to describe the importance of passing a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage had the potential to start a culture war and result in a backlash against the Bush campaign.<sup>21</sup> It also had the potential to anger the more moderate, fiscal conservatives, who tend to focus more on business issues. This required the Bush campaign to find a way to speak to their base without scaring the rest of the country. They had been able to do this by invoking the idea of "compassionate conservatism." Bush began using the idea of compassionate conservatism in

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<sup>18</sup> (Burack, 2008) pg. xiv

<sup>19</sup> (Milbank, 2001)

<sup>20</sup> (Mitchell, 2007)

<sup>21</sup> (Foer, 2004)



1998, while Governor of Texas. The concept of compassionate conservatism allows conservative politicians to tackle social issues by applying traditional conservative values.<sup>22</sup>

Leaders of the Christian Right have, over time, developed a method of speaking differently for different audiences. In doing so, they create cohesion through a view that they are victims of intolerance.<sup>23</sup> This has manifested itself through the use of an “us vs. them” rhetorical strategy, which President Bush implemented enthusiastically when speaking on issues of terrorism. This language can be difficult to counter, as we can see when looking at Sen. John Kerry’s response. He was torn between the interests of the Democratic Party’s most loyal voting blocs and some of its best fundraisers. Yet his response seemed to fully please no one. Kerry chose a nuanced position, which supported both civil unions and Constitutional amendments to state constitutions to outlaw same-sex marriage.

President Bush learned the importance of the Evangelical community while working with his father, George H.W. Bush on the 1988 Presidential campaign, where one of his roles was to act as a liaison between the faith community and the campaign.<sup>24</sup> The elder Bush had a difficult time personally connecting with leaders of the faith community. This was partly due to the fact that he was not openly spiritual.<sup>25</sup> As the liaison to the faith community, the younger Bush was able to introduce himself to faith leaders and prove to them that he was deeply entrenched in the evangelical lifestyle.

The elder Bush did not necessarily connect with the Evangelical community, who recognized his dedication to pragmatism versus commitment to conservative dogma.<sup>26</sup> The Christian Conservative community is characterized by its world view that there is good and evil

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<sup>22</sup> (Rove, 2010) pg. 158

<sup>23</sup> (Burack, 2008) pg. 10-11

<sup>24</sup> (Hook, 2004)

<sup>25</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007)

<sup>26</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007)

in the world, a view not shared by pragmatists like George H.W. Bush who made many of his governing decisions based on his desire to find consensus and get the United States out of debt.<sup>27</sup> George W. Bush, as a born-again Christian, understood this world view and went with it, as we can see from his reaction to the September 11, 2001 attacks. He made a very clear statement that you are “either with us or against us.”<sup>28</sup> This rhetoric makes sense to the evangelical community, and was a strategy employed by the Bush-Cheney campaign to speak to them without alienating non-religious voters.<sup>29</sup>

Same-sex marriage had long been a controversial issue in the Evangelical Christian community. The community rallied around the issue in the summer of 2003, when Don Wildmon, founder of the American Family Association held a summit of evangelical leaders.<sup>30</sup> As the founder and President of the American Family Association, Wildmon had spearheaded the efforts of the evangelical community “to inform, motivate, and equip God's people to take action on issues that threaten to undermine and destroy the traditional family and the Judeo-Christian values upon which our nation was founded,” especially focusing on the media’s role in society.<sup>31</sup> James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, and Sandy Rios, president of Concerned Women for America, along with other leaders of the evangelical community attended the summit. The gathering occurred at a time when it appeared that the evangelical community had been successful in electing politicians, yet the community was still disappointed at the speed of progress towards their goals.<sup>32</sup> This meeting allowed movement leaders to refocus around

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<sup>27</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007)

<sup>28</sup> (Bush, Speech to a Joint Session of Congress, 2001)

<sup>29</sup> (Burack, 2008)

<sup>30</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007) pg. 139-140

<sup>31</sup> (American Family Association)

<sup>32</sup> (O'Keefe, 2003)

issues which could be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The group settled upon the issue of same-sex marriage.

The summer 2003 summit was able to look ahead and anticipate that the threat of legalized same-sex marriage had the potential to motivate conservative voters. This gathering of conservative political activists united behind the concern that same-sex marriage could be legalized through the judiciary, the branch of government that had previously galvanized the evangelical community (i.e., legalizing abortion and outlawing school pray).<sup>33</sup> Collectively, these political activists decided to focus on the issue of gay marriage in order to reignite the evangelical, Christian Right.<sup>34</sup> That decision made same-sex marriage a natural focus of the Bush campaign to turn out Christian Right voters on Election Day. The Evangelical community's broad support for the issue allowed for the Bush campaign to count on the development of a grassroots campaign, requiring them to invest few resources to drive this group of voters to the polls.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Why Same-Sex Marriage?***

The Bush campaign determined very early that the 2004 election would be more about turning out the base than appealing to undecided voters. As a result, they didn't change much of their messaging from the 2000 campaign and instead delved further into the issues which would be most likely to draw out base voters. Same-sex marriage was not necessarily an obvious choice as a domestic issue calling card, yet it was an issue which would bring out the Republican base and motivate fundraising, while driving a wedge between the Democratic Party base. Ken Mehlman, 2004 Bush campaign manager, and Matthew Dowd, chief strategist, both identified

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<sup>33</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007) pg. 140

<sup>34</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007) pg. 140-141

<sup>35</sup> (Green, Rozell, & Wilcox, 2006) pg. 13

same-sex marriage as an issue which would turn out base voters and motivate fundraising, but would not turnout “soft” conservative voters, who did not necessarily identify with a conservative stance on social issues.<sup>36</sup>

After the January 27 New Hampshire primary, Gallup had Bush leading prospective Democratic opponents on issues related to security, but not on any other domestic political issue. The same poll found that Iraq and other security issues were considered to be the third and fourth most important issue to voters when considering who to vote for.<sup>37</sup> It is very difficult to win an election if voters do not agree with you on the issues. Yet, a Gallup Poll from February 25, 2004, found that 51% of all voters supported an amendment to the Constitution which would define marriage as between a man and a woman. More specifically, 65% of self-identified Conservatives and 66% of self-identified Republicans supported such an amendment. These poll results tell us that the issue did in fact resonate with Bush’s base.<sup>38</sup> The Gallup Poll shows us that a strategic political decision to bring up the issue of same-sex marriage had the potential to turn out voters, and give Bush a winning domestic issue.

The fact that Bush mostly reused his domestic agenda from the 2000 campaign contributed to his lack of winning domestic issues, a departure from a traditional re-election tactic of running on ones record. This is very clear when we look at the issues of Social Security privatization, increasing faith-based government initiatives, and decreasing dependence on foreign energy sources. Bush used the same language to address both issues in his 2000 and 2004 campaigns.<sup>39</sup> Though Bush was able to create the White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, pass Medicare reform, and the No Child Left Behind legislation, he continued to focus on

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<sup>36</sup> (The Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006) 104-105

<sup>37</sup> (Gallup & Newport, 2006) pg. 34-35

<sup>38</sup> (Gallup & Newport, 2006) pg. 85-87

<sup>39</sup> (Kornblut, 2004)

domestic issues that he had four years to address. The issue of same-sex marriage provided an avenue to address an issue that was not part of the conversation in 2000 and differentiate himself from the Democratic candidate.

The November 2003 Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* gave the Bush campaign the opportunity to bring up the issue. Bush first mentioned same-sex marriage on February 24, 2004, during a speech which called for a Constitutional Amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman.<sup>40</sup> This speech, given from the Roosevelt Room of the White House, was a delayed response to the Massachusetts ruling which gave the Massachusetts Legislature 180 days to begin granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples. This speech was the first time since the passage of the Federal Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 that same-sex marriage was addressed on a national stage.<sup>41</sup> The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling served as a wake-up call for conservative voters.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Why it works in Ohio***

Ohio in 2004 can certainly be classified as a swing state. Both campaigns saw Ohio as a potential battleground state coming into the 2004 Presidential election.<sup>43</sup> Between January 21, 2001 and May 4, 2004 President Bush visited the state 12 times, while Senator Kerry visited the state nine times.<sup>44</sup> The 2000 Presidential election was very close in Ohio, and ultimately decided by 165,019 votes.<sup>45</sup> This cemented Ohio's position as a swing state, ensuring both campaigns

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<sup>40</sup> (Bush, A Call for a Constitutional Amendment Protecting Marriage, 2004)

<sup>41</sup> (Rauch, 2004)

<sup>42</sup> (Rove, 2010) 374

<sup>43</sup> (The Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006) 196-7

<sup>44</sup> (Welcome to Ohio --and the heart of the electin battle, 2004)

<sup>45</sup> (Ohio Secretary of State's Office, 2008)

would spend a lot of time and resources in pursuit of the states' 20 Electoral College votes. Finding one issue that could motivate a small number of voters who either had not voted in 2000 or who chose to change their party vote could be the difference between winning or losing the 2004 Presidential election.

The economy is a particular important issue during election years. James Campbell theorizes that there are three key areas which decide elections, "the public's opinion about the candidates at the outset of the campaign, the growth in the election year economy, and incumbency."<sup>46</sup> Clearly, President Bush already had incumbency, giving him a strong platform from which to begin the campaign. Exit polls revealed that Bush was a relatively polarizing figure. When asked how Bush was handling his job, 53 percent of Ohio voters approved of his job performance. These voters overwhelmingly (93 percent) voted to re-elect President Bush. Further, 89 percent of Ohio voters decided who they would be voting for more than one week before the election. Of those voters, 53 percent voted for President Bush.<sup>47</sup>

Campbell further elaborates on the importance of the economy by looking to the recent past to find that, in the past 100 years, very few incumbent Presidents have been re-elected during times of economic downturn.<sup>48</sup> Nationwide, in 2004, the economy was slowly improving, yet the Bush presidency had not been good for Ohio's economy. Approximately 250,000 jobs were lost, while a poll of residents found that only 40% of Ohioans approved of Bush's handling of the economy during his first term.<sup>49</sup> The United States Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that between 1998 and 2004, Ohio's per capita income as a percent of the United States per

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<sup>46</sup> (Campbell J. E., *Why Bush Won the Presidential Election of 2004: Incumbency, Ideology, Terrorism, and Turnout*, 2005)

<sup>47</sup> (National Election Pool)

<sup>48</sup> (Campbell J. E., *The American Campaign: U.S. Presidential Campaigns and the National Vote*, 2008) pg 126-139

<sup>49</sup> (Kahn, 2004)

capita income declined from 97% to approximately 93%.<sup>50</sup> Ohioans were making less money than the average American and their earning power was continuing to decline during President Bush's first term. Further, Ohio's largest industry is durable goods manufacturing, a sector of the national economy that was hit especially hard during the early 2000s.<sup>51</sup>

Overall, Bush's campaign chose to emphasize their position on the war on terror and Iraq. We can see this when looking at Paul Abramson, John Aldrich and David Rohde's study of the 2004 Presidential Election. They found that President Bush mentioned terrorism, Iraq, and the military 52 times in stump speeches between March and November 2004, more than any topic.<sup>52</sup> Senator Kerry only mentioned terrorism, Iraq, and the military 28 times, instead choosing to focus on the economy. In Ohio, Bush needed an issue which would both distract and energize voters. Same-sex marriage was just the issue because it allowed voters to stop focusing on their wallets and consider moral issues. In a sense, same-sex marriage encouraged voters who were hurting economically to redirect their attention away from the economy.

### ***Issue I***

The ballot language for State Issue 1 reads as follows:

*Be it Resolved by the People of the State of Ohio:*

*That the Constitution of the State of Ohio be amended by adopting a section to be designated as Section 11 of Article XV thereof, to read as follows:*

*Article XV, Section 11. Only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this state and its political subdivisions. This state and its political subdivisions shall not create or recognize a legal status for relationships of*

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<sup>50</sup> (U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008)

<sup>51</sup> (U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008)

<sup>52</sup> (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, 2005)

*unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance or effect of marriage.*

The ballot language for State Issue one was submitted by the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage (OCPM), an organization affiliated with Focus on the Family. The group was created by Phil Burress, a Cincinnati-based community organizer who has spent the past 25 years working to rid the area of sex-related businesses including porn distributors and strip clubs.<sup>53</sup> The campaign's efforts began in response to the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling in the *Goodridge* case.<sup>54</sup> Yet Burress had been aware of the possibility of legalized same-sex marriage since late 1995. Since then, he has been a driving force in nationwide efforts to outlaw same-sex marriage, helping to encourage lawmakers to pass the 1996 Federal Defense of Marriage Act.<sup>55</sup> OCPM was co-chaired by Rev. KZ Smith of Corinthian Baptist Church, a predominately black Cincinnati area mega-church,<sup>56</sup> and Lori Viars, executive director of Family First PAC, a Lebanon, Ohio based conservative political action committee focused on providing money and support to conservative candidates.<sup>57</sup>

The organization needed 323,000 signatures from registered voters in order to reach the ballot in November 2004. At first, they succeeded in collecting 400,000, 30 percent of which were disqualified by Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell for being from unregistered voters. The campaign was then able to collect an additional 144,000 signatures in order to get the issue on the ballot.<sup>58</sup> They gathered these signatures in less than 90 days.<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to collect the

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<sup>53</sup> (Clark, 2002)

<sup>54</sup> (Foust, 2004)

<sup>55</sup> (Dao, 2004)

<sup>56</sup> (Corinthian Baptist Church, 2008)

<sup>57</sup> (Family First PAC, 2008)

<sup>58</sup> (Foust, 2004)



number of signatures necessary to make it onto the ballot under any circumstances. Meeting this deadline in three months is a clear indicator of the level of organization the campaign had.

OCPM proactively recruited members and supporters. A survey of Columbus area churches shows that 67.2 percent of churches were familiar with OCPM. They were the second most known organization associated with Issue 1, second only to the Christian Coalition of Ohio, an organization with a much longer history of organizing Ohioans around social conservative issues. We can see this as a sample of their advocacy throughout the rest of the state. They focused on obtaining signatures from churches and religious organizations, in the process cultivating a database of 1.5 million conservative voters, accounting for more than 10 percent of Ohio's population.<sup>60</sup> OCPM also registered approximately 54,500 new voters, while conducting petition drives at churches.<sup>61</sup>

The campaign for Issue 1 learned from the mistakes of similar campaigns when crafting the language of the amendment. Specifically, we can look to the 1992 marriage amendment passed in Colorado, which was the subject of the 1996 Supreme Court ruling in *Romer v. Evans*. In 1992, Colorado voters approved an amendment to their Constitution which made it illegal to pass civil rights protection laws for the LGBT community and repealed any already passed piece of legislation which provided protection based on sexual orientation. Like Ohio's Issue 1, Colorado's Issue 2 was a citizen's initiative.<sup>62</sup> The United States Supreme Court struck down Colorado's amendment in 1996, when a majority of the Court found that laws could not explicitly exclude a class of people from protection under the law.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> (Dao, 2004)

<sup>60</sup> (Dao, 2004)

<sup>61</sup> (Foust, 2004)

<sup>62</sup> (Herman, 2000) pg. 150

<sup>63</sup> (D'Emilio, 2000) pg. 41

Colorado's Issue 2 also represented the first time the Evangelical Christian community mobilized against same-sex marriage.<sup>64</sup> James Dobson, founder and then-President of the conservative Focus on the Family organization advocated for the passage of the Amendment on his radio show. As in Ohio, support for the Amendment originated in a central location (Colorado Springs, where Focus on the Family was based) which was relatively separate from the politics of the rest of the state.<sup>65</sup> Evangelical community support made passage of Issue 2 possible.<sup>66</sup> Issue 2 passed with 53 percent of the vote, surprising political observers. Supporters framed the issue as banning giving "special rights" to the LGBT community versus providing for equal rights. Those who regularly attended church were more likely to believe that the LGBT community wanted "special rights."<sup>67</sup>

Framers of Ohio's Issue 1 language saw that language specifically banning protection of a class of people would be considered unconstitutional. As a result, the language of Issue 1 is significantly different. Instead of limiting the rights of a group of people, it seeks to define marriage as between one man and one woman. The *Romer* decision did not address this wording, allowing the amendment to make it to the ballot without argument. *Romer* made it clear that whole groups of people could not be excluded from protection under the law. Yet the legacy of anti-sodomy laws, which were not found unconstitutional until the 2003 Supreme Court case of *Lawrence v. Texas*, was still present in legislation concerning the LGBT community.<sup>68</sup>

Two very different groups opposed Issue 1. The main opposition group to Issue 1 was Ohioans Protecting the Constitution. They were responsible for the language in opposition of the amendment which also appeared on the ballot. The group was lead by Alan Melamed, a

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<sup>64</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007) pg. 34-36

<sup>65</sup> (Ciruli Associates, May 2004)

<sup>66</sup> (Gilgoff, 2007)

<sup>67</sup> (Ciruli Associates, May 2004)

<sup>68</sup> (D'Emilio, 2000) pg. 41

Cleveland attorney and political communications consultant. He and Ian James of the Strategy Network, were hired in May 2004 by Ohioans for Growth and Equality to lead the Ohioans Protecting the Constitution.<sup>69</sup> Ohioans for Growth and Equality (OGE) is a political action organization founded at the beginning of the 2003-2004 Ohio Legislative Session, after the General Assembly debated the passage of a Defense of Marriage Amendment in the 2001-2001 legislative session. OGE hired professional representation to maintain LGBT voices as a political presence in state government.<sup>70</sup>

Ohioans Protecting the Constitution faced several challenges during the campaign. First and foremost, they had a funding disadvantage to the pro-Issue 1 community. The Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage raised approximately \$1,194,808.<sup>71</sup> \$1,182,139 of this money was contributed by Citizens for Community Values, a Cincinnati-based conservative non-profit organization with direct ties to Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, and the American Family Foundation, three of the leading nation-wide conservative organizations.<sup>72</sup> OPC raised \$942,421 from a much more diverse group of donors. Their largest donor was the Human Rights Campaign, followed closely by several independently wealthy individuals.<sup>73</sup> Having one central donor allowed OCPM to spend less time focusing on fundraising, a time consuming process.

On the surface the fundraising difference does not appear too extreme, yet further analysis proves otherwise. 99.9 percent of OCPM's money came from in-state sources, compared to 49.9 percent of OPC's money.<sup>74</sup> Further, the fact that the majority of OCPM's

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<sup>69</sup> (Resnick, Gay People's Chronicle, 2004)

<sup>70</sup> (Ohioans for Growth and Equality)

<sup>71</sup> (National Institute on Money in State Politics)

<sup>72</sup> (Citizens for Community Values, 2010)

<sup>73</sup> (National Institute on Money in State Politics)

<sup>74</sup> (National Institute on Money in State Politics)

funding came from a single, well connected source, indicates that they probably had to do less work to raise the funds. This, combined with the fact that the conservative community could draw support from a well established, statewide network of churches meant that they needed less money to reach more people. Ohio's LGBT community is much smaller and has less political influence than Ohio's evangelical community. As a result, OPC would have had to spend more to get their message out and build a grassroots network. A thriving field operation never materialized, due to a lack of funds.<sup>75</sup>

The second component of the anti-Issue 1 community was pro-business Republicans and corporate interests who thought that the amendment would be bad for business. The coalition behind the OPC was a bi-partisan coalition, including Log Cabin Republicans national board chair Bill Brownson and David Caldwell, the organizer of Cleveland Heights, Ohio's domestic partner registry.<sup>76</sup> Then Governor Bob Taft, along with then Senators Mike DeWine and George Voinovich, and Attorney General Jim Petro, all Republicans, wrote an editorial in the Cincinnati Enquirer explaining that they opposed Issue 1 because it would be bad for Ohio's economy.<sup>77</sup> Several major Ohio corporations supported their argument that many companies in Ohio already provided domestic partner benefits. Such a restrictive amendment could also potentially impact non-married, heterosexual couples. Further, they argued that the amendment was unnecessary due to the passage of Ohio's Defense of Marriage Act earlier that year.

We can also see the impact of the business community when looking at OPC's fundraising. One of their largest donor's was Nationwide Mutual Insurance. The Columbus-based insurance company donated \$20,000 to OPC, as did Abigail Wexner, wife of Limited Brands CEO Les Wexner. Yet the OPC campaign never fully utilized potential support from the

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<sup>75</sup> (Resnick, The Lessons of Issue 1, 2005)

<sup>76</sup> (Resnick, The Lessons of Issue 1, 2005)

<sup>77</sup> (Cincinnati Enquirer Editorial Board, 2004)

business community. The campaign never tapped into the bipartisan support to create a field operation.<sup>78</sup> The lack of a grassroots field operation, combined with a lack of funds, meant that it was much more difficult to get the anti-Issue 1 message out.

Overall, Issue 1 provided a strange political opportunity for both the Republican and Democratic Parties. The same-sex marriage issue allowed the Republican Party to speak to religious African-American voters who identified as Democrats but were more socially conservative. It also allowed the Democratic Party to reach out to Republican voters disillusioned with the growing importance of social conservatives to the Republican voting bloc.

### ***Ohio as a Battleground***

Bush's 2000 election victory was anything but easy for the Bush-Cheney campaign team. Immediately after their victory, the trio of Campaign Manager Ken Mehlman, Political Strategist Karl Rove and Chief Campaign Strategist Matthew Dowd looked at the voter turnout and results from the election and determined that the 2004 election would be about turning out base voters, not necessarily wooing independents.<sup>79</sup> In his book *Courage and Consequence*, Rove indicated that gay marriage was not necessarily an issue the campaign originally thought to pursue. Instead, they pursued the issue after it became apparent that it was an issue which could both show how President Bush could compassionately solve a controversial issue and reveal how indecisive the "Left" was.<sup>80</sup> Tapping into the evangelical community was one easy way to increase voter turnout and help Bush win re-election. The combination of the results of the 2000 Presidential election, the emergence of Issue 1, and the growing importance of the evangelical community ensured that Ohio would be a battleground in the 2004 Presidential election.

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<sup>78</sup> (Resnick, *The Lessons of Issue 1*, 2005)

<sup>79</sup> (Moore & Slater, 2006) pg 77-81

<sup>80</sup> (Rove, 2010) 374-375

Ohio has a unique political geography that distinguishes it from many other states. There are 9 media markets wholly in the state and another three from other states with viewership in Ohio.<sup>81</sup> This represents a challenge when campaigning in the state. In order to reach the maximum number of voters a campaign must spread its time and resources over a very large area. Yet it also represents an opportunity for grassroots organizers to take political action without informing their competition. The Issue 1 campaign began in Cincinnati and focused much of its early efforts in southern Ohio. As a result, LGBT rights activists in northern Ohio were not aware that the effort was as serious as it was until July 2004, relatively late in the game.<sup>82</sup>

The 2004 election showed us that same-sex marriage was an issue which could galvanize grassroots efforts. The Bush-Cheney campaign anticipated that it would be a very close election, and therefore, put an added emphasis on establishing a good field campaign which could turnout supporters. The Kerry-Edwards campaign recognized that the result of the election would likely come down to how Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida voted. As a result, both campaigns focused their resources on these three states.<sup>83</sup>

In Ohio, Republicans had been developing a get out the vote strategy since 2000, and used the 2002 mid-term election to test it. Their strategy was built around person to person networking and outreach.<sup>84</sup> The Bush-Cheney campaign team went so far as to use church membership directories to target potential voters.<sup>85</sup> The importance both campaigns placed on their get out the vote efforts is indicated by the amount of money they spent on their efforts. The Bush-Cheney campaign spent approximately \$125 million, or about three times more money

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<sup>81</sup> (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, 2005)

<sup>82</sup> (Biliczky, 2004)

<sup>83</sup> (The Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006) pg. 196

<sup>84</sup> (The Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006)

<sup>85</sup> (Moore & Slater, 2006) pg. 114-115

than was allocated for voter turnout in 2000.<sup>86</sup> The Kerry campaign budgeted more than twice as much for voter turnout, or approximately \$60 million, than the Gore campaign had in 2000. They were also aided by money and resources from influential labor unions.<sup>87</sup> Union support is especially important in Ohio, a manufacturing state. Exit polls indicate that 17 percent of Ohio voters in 2004 were members of a union, three percent more than nationwide.<sup>88</sup>

Issue 1 supporters replicated the Republican strategy. The Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage used person to person networking through the religious community to create a database of supporters, creating an incredibly strong, grassroots field network. OCPM's grassroots network closely resembled the grassroots network of evangelicals created by the Bush-Cheney campaign. In contrast, the anti-Issue 1 campaign, with was a much broader coalition of interests, was never able to unify and create a cohesive message. The inherent nature of the religious community gave Issue 1 supporters and Republicans an advantage in establishing a field network. This became a huge strategic advantage when trying to turn out supporters on Election Day. As a result, we can say that having Issue 1 on the ballot was a strategic advantage for the Bush-Cheney campaign because it created a unified group of supporters who would already be going to the polls. All the Bush campaign had to do was ensure that supporters of Issue 1 understood President Bush' stance on the subject, a stance he had clearly defined.

### ***Did Issue 1 Have an Impact on the Election?***

Ultimately, Issue 1 passed with 61.71 percent of the vote, or 3,329,335 votes in favor compared to 2,065,462 opposed,<sup>89</sup> considerably more votes than President Bush received. Bush

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<sup>86</sup> (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, 2005)

<sup>87</sup> (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, 2005)

<sup>88</sup> (National Election Pool)

<sup>89</sup> (Ohio Secretary of State's Office, 2008)

received 50.81 percent of the vote, or 2,859,768 votes, compared to 48.71 percent of the vote, or 2,741,167 votes for Senator Kerry.<sup>90</sup> In total, 233,111 more people voted in the Presidential election than voted for Issue 1. Yet Issue 1 passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support, as it passed by 469,567 more votes than President Bush received. This means that supporters of Issue 1 were able to reach voters not generally associated with the Republican Party.

Issue 1, Ohio SoS		
Yes	No	Total
3,329,335	2,065,462	5,394,797
President, Ohio SoS		
Bush	Kerry	Total
2,859,768	2,741,167	5,600,935

We can look to the National Election Pool to better understand who voted and for what reasons. The National Election Pool (NEP) is a joint effort between ABC, CBS, CNN, FOX, NBC and the Associated Press. Collectively, the news outlets hired Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International to conduct exit polls following General Elections.<sup>91</sup> Following the 2004 Presidential election, the media widely reported that the deciding issue had been “moral values.” This is due to the results of the NEP exit poll results, which found that nationwide, 22 percent of voters listed “moral values” as the most important factor when deciding for whom to vote. Voters who listed moral values as the most important issue voted for President Bush 80 percent of the time and Senator Kerry 18 percent of the time. “Economy/jobs” came in a close second, for 20 percent of voters selecting it as the most important issue. Voters who listed the economy/jobs as the most important issue voted for President Bush 18 percent of the time and Senator Kerry 80 percent of the time.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> (Ohio Secretary of State's Office, 2008)

<sup>91</sup> (Edison Media Research, 2007)

<sup>92</sup> (National Election Pool)



<b>Issue, Nationwide</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Bush</b>	<b>Kerry</b>
Moral Values	22%	80%	18%
Economy/Jobs	20%	18%	80%
Terrorism	19%	86%	14%
Iraq	15%	26%	73%
Health Care	8%	23%	77%
Taxes	5%	57%	43%
Education	4%	26%	73%

According to NEP, Ohio's exit poll results were somewhat different from the national averages. Voters selected moral values as the most important issue 23 percent of the time and the economy/jobs 24 percent of the time. Ohio voters that selecting moral values outpaced the national average, and voted for President Bush 85 percent of the time, while only voting for Senator Kerry 14 percent of the time. Ohio voters that selected the economy/jobs as the most important issue again outpaced the national average, voting for Senator Kerry 83 percent of the time and President Bush 17 percent of the time.<sup>93</sup>

<b>Issue, Ohio</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Bush</b>	<b>Kerry</b>
Moral Values	23%	62%	38%
Economy/Jobs	24%	17%	83%
Terrorism	17%	90%	10%
Iraq	13%	28%	72%
Health Care	5%	25%	75%
Taxes	6%	62%	38%
Education	5%	32%	66%

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<sup>93</sup> (National Election Pool)

The term moral values may be a bit misleading. The same poll also asked voters what the most important quality they looked at when deciding who to vote for. When given the choice between “cares about people,” “religious faith,” “honesty,” “strong leader,” “intelligent,” “will bring change,” and “clear stand on issue,” voters only selected religious faith ten percent of the time. This made it the sixth most important quality their candidate possessed. Voters who selected religious faith overwhelmingly voted for President Bush, 95 percent to 5 percent.<sup>94</sup>

Looking at both poll questions gives us a clearer understanding of what Ohio voters were thinking when they voted. A Pew Research Center poll from after the election found that voters who selected moral values as the most important factor in their decision had very different opinions as to what constituted moral values.<sup>95</sup> Moral values had several meanings for voters in Ohio. An article in the San Francisco Chronicle published before the election spoke with Canton, Ohio voters. Specifically, the article spoke with the manager of an employment agency who noted that many of the city’s unemployed were willing to overlook the problems with the economy because of President Bush’s personal faith.<sup>96</sup> The broadness of the term moral values allowed individuals to interpret it in many ways. Making the assumption that voters selected moral values because of same-sex marriage jumps to a conclusion without proper evidence.

We can see the effect of Issue 1 when looking at the vote of Ohio’s African-American community. In Ohio, the African-American community represented 10 percent of the electorate in 2004 versus 11 percent of the electorate nationwide. In 2000, President Bush garnered seven percent more of the African-American community than he did in 2004. Bush gained 16 percent of the African-American vote compared to Kerry’s 84 percent share. This is a bigger increase than Bush experienced nationwide, where he gained two percent more of the vote, bringing his

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<sup>94</sup> (National Election Pool)

<sup>95</sup> (Gary & Cohen, 2005)

<sup>96</sup> (Badkhen, 2004)

share of the African-American vote to 11 percent.<sup>97</sup> The increase in Bush's share of the Ohio African-American community is statistically significant. The combination of increased targeting of the African-American community by conservative organizers of Issue 1 and the differing social values of their community in comparison to the Democratic Party, meant that the African-American community was one that had the potential to change sides. The Bush campaign was able to take advantage of this, and gain a larger share of the vote.

Bush Voter Turnout, National Election Pool				
	Black		White	
	Ohio	US	Ohio	US
2000	9	9	55	54
2004	16	11	56	58

Issue 1 also increased voter turnout amongst individuals who attend church on a regular basis. 14 percent of Ohio voters stated that they attended church more than weekly, 69 percent of these voters cast their vote for President Bush. President Bush increased his vote share of this community by 17 percent.<sup>98</sup> This is one area where Issue 1 certainly had a direct impact on the Presidential election results. As already noted, the evangelical community had been targeted by the Bush-Cheney campaign as one base constituency where an increase in voter turnout would be both possible and helpful. Both the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage and the Bush-Cheney campaign directly targeted members of churches. The Bush-Cheney campaign used church membership directories to target potential voters.<sup>99</sup> The OCPM used the same tactic, developing a 1.5 million person database from membership directories.<sup>100</sup> This indicates that potential voters were contacted by both campaigns. Increased contact, especially by a single-issue campaign that

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<sup>97</sup> (National Election Pool), (National Election Pool)

<sup>98</sup> (National Election Pool)

<sup>99</sup> (Moore & Slater, 2006) pg. 114-115

<sup>100</sup> (Dao, 2004)

supported a candidate higher up the ticket increases the likelihood that voters will consider your position.

<b>Vote by Church Attendance, Ohio</b>			
	Total (%)	Bush (%)	Kerry (%)
More than Weekly	14	69	31
Weekly	26	64	36
Monthly	15	50	50
A Few times a Year	28	40	60
Never	14	35	63

Ohio's 2004 election also saw an incredible increase in turnout and voter registration. In total, there were 441,271 more Ohioans registered to vote in 2004 than in 2000. As noted, the Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage alone registered 54,000 new voters. In Franklin County, churches were incredibly active in registering their members, with 80 percent of Roman Catholic churches and 59 percent of Evangelical Protestant churches involved in voter registration.<sup>101</sup> There were 102,000 new voters registered in Franklin County alone.<sup>102</sup> Yet Issue 1 was probably not the largest motivator for new registration. Approximately 15 percent of Ohio voters had never voter before. We can assume these voters were newly registered. Of these new voters, 46 percent voted for President Bush and 54 percent voted for Senator Kerry.<sup>103</sup> We can attribute this difference to the emphasis each campaign put on registering new voters. While the Bush-Cheney campaign still recognized the importance of new voters, their focus was on turning out their base.<sup>104</sup> The Kerry campaign and associated Democrat leaning organizations worked hard to

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<sup>101</sup> (Djupe, Neiheisel, & Sokhey, 2007)

<sup>102</sup> (Miller, 2005)

<sup>103</sup> (National Election Pool)

<sup>104</sup> (Moore & Slater, 2006)

register new voters in order to increase voter turnout in their favor.<sup>105</sup> These newly registered voters were often minorities and young people, two groups of people often affected by voter suppression techniques.

This strategy appeared to work for the Bush-Cheney campaign. 34 percent of Ohio voters self-identified as Conservatives. Of that 34 percent, 87 percent voted for President Bush, an increase of 5 percent from the 2000 Presidential Election. Only 19 percent of Ohio voters self-identified as Liberal in 2004.<sup>106</sup> Though President Bush lost 2 percent of these voters, the difference was not enough to change the outcome of the election. We can also see this reflected when voter party identification. 35 percent of Ohio voters self-identified as Democrats, while 40 percent self-identified as Republicans, and the remaining 25 percent self-identifying as Independents. President Bush managed to increase his share of the Republican voters by 5 percent, meaning 94 percent of Republicans voted for him. He maintained his support amongst Democrats, and lost support from Independent voters, gaining 40 percent of their vote, or 14 percent less than he received in 2000.<sup>107</sup> Focusing on motivating the base turned out to be a winning strategy for the Bush-Cheney campaign in Ohio. Issue 1 was an issue which motivated Evangelical base voters. It is clear that Issue 1 impacted the result of the Presidential Election when we look at the election from this perspective.

### ***Election Irregularities***

It is also important to consider what role election irregularities played, when considering if Issue 1 had any impact on the 2004 Presidential election in Ohio. Following the election, the House of Representatives, led by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), conducted an extensive

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<sup>105</sup> (The Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2006)

<sup>106</sup> (National Election Pool)

<sup>107</sup> (National Election Pool)

investigation into election proceedings in Ohio. They found that the majority of the problems were caused by or due to Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell who, while performing his duties as chief election regulator, also served as the co-chairman of President Bush's Ohio re-election campaign. The Conyers report breaks the election irregularities down into three broad areas: first, the collective actions of Secretary of State Blackwell, the Republican Party, and election officials resulted in the unwarranted disenfranchisement of many minority and Democratic voters; second, there were problems on Election Day that caused votes to go unaccounted; and third, following the election, there was very little effort to investigate irregularities or ensure the election was free and fair.<sup>108</sup> It is not possible to accurately determine if Issue 1 truly had an impact as a result of these widespread problems in Ohio voting.

Kenneth Blackwell and the Secretary of State's Office made several controversial decisions leading up to the election. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was passed in 2002 to ensure that the controversy of the 2000 Presidential Election would not be repeated.<sup>109</sup> HAVA was intended to allow the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to providing funding to states in order to update their voting hardware, i.e., swapping punch ballot machines for electronic voting machines. Blackwell did not provide an accounting of how these funds were spent.<sup>110</sup>

The new voting machines were also not allocated appropriately. There were not enough machines in predominately Democratic and minority districts. One very stark example of this comes from Franklin County. Following the election, the Washington Post conducted an extensive investigation into voting irregularities in Franklin County. Franklin County saw 102,000 new voters register to vote. Many of these new voters, according to State Senator Ray Miller's (D-Columbus) testimony in front of the House Judiciary Committee, were African

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<sup>108</sup> (Miller, 2005)

<sup>109</sup> (Lovgren, 2004)

<sup>110</sup> (Miller, 2005)

American.<sup>111</sup> Yet county election officials did not take this into consideration when determining how to allocate resources. As a result, many heavily minority Franklin County precincts did not have enough voting machines to handle the new voters. In fact, several precincts had fewer voting machines in the general election than they had in the primary. This created long lines, which caused voters to wait for extended periods of time. As a result, as many as 15,000 voters were disenfranchised in Columbus alone.<sup>112</sup> These problems were caused by the actions (or inaction) of the Ohio Secretary of State and county boards of election.

On Election Day there were several problems which caused votes to go unaccounted. The Election Protection Commission reported to the Judiciary Committee that there were over 3,300 incidents of voting irregularities, including problems of intimidation and misinformation, machine irregularities, and official misconduct. As a consequence of these problems, the Conyers Report indicates that there were serious violations to the Voting Rights Act which were not investigated by the Secretary of State's Office. These problems created an atmosphere where minority voters especially were disenfranchised. The majority of the Election Day violations occurred in areas with large minority populations.<sup>113</sup>

There were also irregularities in Ohio's post-election actions, specifically in the handling of provisional ballots and recounts. Blackwell enforced a new rule for provisional ballots, deciding that provisional ballots must be cast in the correct precinct. This was a change from tradition, where individuals would be able to cast a provisional ballot in the proper county regardless of the precinct.<sup>114</sup> The guidelines issued also did not provide information regarding how to count these provisional ballots. This resulted in many provisional ballots being tossed

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<sup>111</sup> (Miller, 2005) pg. 20

<sup>112</sup> (Powell & Slevin, 2004)

<sup>113</sup> (Miller, 2005)

<sup>114</sup> (Powell & Slevin, 2004)

out. For example, Cuyahoga County ruled 8,099 out of 24,472 provisional ballots to be invalid.<sup>115</sup> Blackwell also failed to provide comprehensive guidelines for conducting recounts. As a result, recounts across the state were not conducted in a uniform fashion. These ballots were often not treated in a uniform manner, with no basic decision on the state-level as to how ballots should be stored.<sup>116</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The 2004 Presidential election in Ohio was groundbreaking on many fronts. More Ohioans voted than in any election in Ohio history.<sup>117</sup> When we look at why, we can conclude that a combination of factors created an atmosphere where Ohio's importance to the overall Presidential Election was greatly exaggerated. The knowledge that the overall election would be decided by two to three percentage points nationwide meant that Ohio's 20 Electoral College votes became crucial. As a result, both the Bush-Cheney campaign and the Kerry-Edwards campaign increased the time and resources they poured into the state. Both campaigns knew that winning would require getting as many of their supporters to the polls as possible, yet each took different paths to this shared goal. The Kerry-Edwards campaign focused their Ohio resources on registering new voters and wooing independents. The Bush-Cheney campaign concentrated their efforts on turning out their base.

While both campaigns were able to get people to the polls, the Bush-Cheney campaign was simply more successful. They were aided by having Issue 1 on the ballot. Issue 1 spoke directly to the concerns of the Evangelical, conservative Christian Right, a crucial member of President Bush's base. This served as a motivating issue, which could ensure that the Bush-

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<sup>115</sup> (Miller, 2005) pg. 6

<sup>116</sup> (Miller, 2005) pg. 87-91

<sup>117</sup> (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde, 2005)



Cheney campaign strategy of turning out their base would work. It came with the added bonus of having an exceptionally well organized field network. The Ohio Campaign to Protect Marriage was very well organized by people with many years of experience organizing similar conservative issue campaigns throughout Ohio. These organizers were able to capitalize on their institutional knowledge, and a statewide network of churches, which facilitated person-to-person advocacy for Issue 1. Though not necessarily working in concert, the Issue 1 campaign and the Bush-Cheney campaign ran very complimentary campaigns that were successful in motivating their base.

In comparison, the Kerry-Edwards campaign and the anti-Issue 1 movement were much less organized. On the surface, both campaigns had strategic advantages that could have changed the outcomes of both elections. In Ohio, Sen. Kerry had the distinct advantage of not being the incumbent during a difficult economic time. Yet he was unable to truly capitalize on the state of the Ohio economy because the Bush-Cheney campaign kept steering the conversation towards terrorism. By allowing the subject to be changed, the Kerry-Edwards campaign was unable to focus on issues they could win on. The Kerry-Edwards campaign was also unable to capitalize on any potential grassroots support from the anti-Issue 1 campaign, mostly due to the lack of a cohesive anti-Issue 1 effort. Ohioans Protecting the Constitution, the main anti-Issue 1 organization, had the potential to generate bi-partisan support, as Republicans Bob Taft, George Voinovich, Mike DeWine, and Jim Petro all publicly came out against the issue. Corporations were vocal in their opposition to Issue 1 and the LGBT community had the ability to mobilize in major cities. Yet OPC was never able to capitalize on this in order to create a cohesive effort against Issue 1. They failed to capitalize on an issue which had the potential to motivate a new

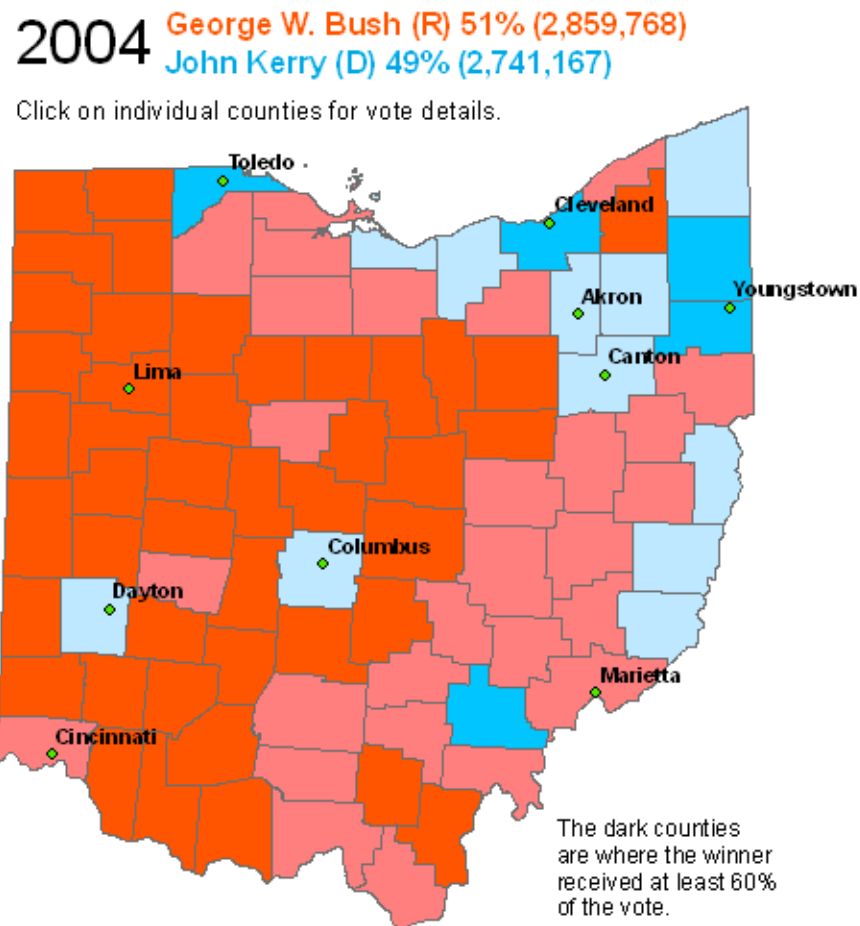
set of voters. When we look at it from this angle, the Bush-Cheney campaign was able to use Issue 1, while the Kerry-Edwards campaign was not.

Both political parties were also able to use Issue 1 to reach a constituency they would not often reach, yet neither party was able to make lasting gains from this opportunity. Republicans were able to use Issue 1 to reach the African-American community, a traditionally Democratic voting bloc. Yet this did not last for two reasons: first, in 2006, Democratic candidate for Governor Ted Strickland, an ordained minister, was able to connect with both the African-American community and many in the Evangelical community by relating through religion, and second, the 2008 Democratic candidate for President Barack Obama solidified the African-American community's support for the Democratic Party. It was possible for the Democratic Party to use Issue 1 to speak to fiscally conservative Republicans who did not agree with government advances into issues such as same-sex marriage. But the inability of the Democratic Party to organize a successful, cohesive campaign made this difficult, if not impossible.

Issue 1's overall impact on the Presidential Election is by no means absolute. Instead, Issue 1 created opportunities for both parties to grow and turnout their supporters. Ultimately, we can see that Issue 1 ensured that a segment of base voters who might not necessarily be motivated to go to the polls had a specific reason to vote.

# Appendix:

Map 1: This map shows all the counties in Ohio and 10 major cities. Red indicates counties that voted Republican, while blue indicates counties that voted Democratic.



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